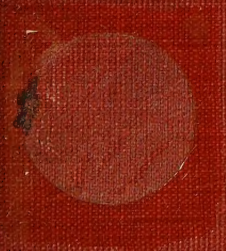
THAT YE MAY BELIEVE

DAVID KEPPEL



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THE BOOK OF REVELATION NOT A MYSTERY

THAT YE MAY KNOW

That Ye May Believe

The Argument of Saint John's Gospel

By
DAVID KEPPEL

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TO THE MEMORY OF

THREE JOHNS

MY BROTHER

THE REVEREND JOHN HADDEN KEPPEL

PREACHER OF THE GOSPEL IN CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES, WHO WAS THE FIRST TO ENCOURAGE ME IN THESE STUDIES;

MY FATHER

JOHN KEPPEL

OF TULLOW, IRELAND, AND LATER OF THE UNITED STATES, AN EARNEST STUDENT OF HOLY SCRIPTURE, INCLUDING JOHN'S GOSPEL;

MY GRANDFATHER

THE REVEREND JOHN HADDEN

ONE OF JOHN WESLEY'S PREACHERS IN IRELAND, HIMSELF A SON OF THUNDER AND A BELOVED DISCIPLE.

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PREFATORY NOTE

In the Gospel of Saint John there are two things of importance, the *substance* of the book and the *object* for which it was written. In the substance of the book we have a nearly unique account of the works and words of Jesus, with the evangelist's profound deductions.

With the substance of the book the reader is apt to become quite familiar. He reads John's Gospel, as he reads the synoptic Gospels, for the sacred story and the lessons that lie upon the surface.

But the average reader is exceedingly apt to miss the object of the book. If we are not greatly mistaken, very few readers can tell offhand why John wrote the book at all.

Yet Saint John is careful to state the object of his book. "These things are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that

believing ye may have life through his name" (20. 31); just as near the close of his First Epistle, he states the object of that little tract, "These things have I written unto you, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, *even* unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God" (1 John 5. 13).

Thus the Epistle completes the argument of the Gospel. In a former treatise entitled *That Ye May Know* we attempted to trace the line of argument of the Epistle; in the present treatise we attempt to do the same for the Gospel, by tracing John's argument, proving that Jesus is indeed the Christ, the Son of God, and the grounds given for such belief in Christ that we may have life through his name.

Trusting that the purpose of the Gospel of John may be realized by many readers, that they may be led to accept Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, and find eternal life through faith in his name, this little book is sent forth.

I

THE TESTIMONY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST TO JESUS

(John 1. 19-36; 3. 22-36.)

In bringing his Gospel to a close Saint John tells us why he wrote it: "These things are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life through his name" (John 20. 31).

The author never loses sight of this purpose; and each successive section of his book contains a direct argument, usually based upon some sign shown by the Lord Jesus, and bearing upon the purpose just stated.

To present these arguments, culminating in the proof that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, in a series of brief and helpful chapters, is the purpose of the writer.

First we consider the testimony of John the Baptist to Jesus.

A wonderful man was John the Baptist. One of the few whose career was foretold by the earlier prophets, he was accepted by the mass of the people as a prophet, and declared by our Lord to be more than a prophet.

His testimony to Jesus falls into two parts: his earlier testimony given at Bethany beyond Jordan, when he first met Jesus; his later testimony given at Ænon near to Salim, some months later.

In his earlier testimony he says that He who had sent him to baptize had given him a sign: "Upon whomsoever thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and abiding upon him, the same is he that baptizeth in the Holy Spirit" (1. 33).

Jesus came to his baptism a stranger; but on him was the sign fulfilled. "I have beheld the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven; and it abode on him.

. . . And I have seen, and have borne witness that this is the Son of God" (1. 32, 34).

Such was the Baptist's testimony to Jesus. Over and again he repeats it. To the delegates from the Pharisees he says: "In the midst of you standeth one whom ye know not, *even* he that cometh after me, the latchet of whose shoe I am not worthy to unloose" (26, 27).

To those who attended his ministry he said, pointing to Jesus as he walked, "Behold, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world!" (29) and to two of his disciples, one of them Andrew, the other probably John the author of the Gospel, he repeated: "Behold, the Lamb of God!" (36).

His later testimony is recorded after Jesus had been exercising his ministry for some time, and was followed by multitudes of the common people, but despised and rejected by their rulers.

Being driven out of Jerusalem, he went with his disciples into the open

country of northern Judæa, "and there he tarried with them, and baptized." At the same time John the Baptist was baptizing at "Ænon, near to Salim." Thus the two masters were exercising similar functions not many miles apart (3. 23).

Jesus had the crowd; and a discussion which arose between the disciples of John and a Jew, who may have been an adherent of Jesus, about purifying, brought the not unnatural jealousy of John's disciples to a crisis.

The disciples carried the case to their master. "Rabbi," said they, "he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou hast borne witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him" (3. 26).

Note his noble and utterly unselfish answer: "A man can receive nothing, except it have been given him from heaven. Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but, that I am sent before him. . . .

He must increase, but I must decrease" (27-30).

It is not easy to decide whether the following testimony is from the Baptist, or from the evangelist; but it is to the effect that Jesus is as superior to John as the bridegroom to the groomsman, as the heavenly to the earthy, as the son to the servant.

Perhaps the most important point in this testimony to Jesus by John the Baptist is that it is given by the duly authorized and foretold "messenger of the covenant" (Mal. 3. 1). Verily, in assuming his place as the "great shepherd of the sheep" Jesus entered by the door into the sheepfold, and did not climb up some other way! "To him the porter," who is none other than this same messenger, "openeth." He came in the regular, God-appointed way, as foretold by the holy prophets.

Another point worthy of notice is that the Baptist announces him, not as the Christ, or Messiah only, but as

the Son of God. To us both terms convey about the same idea; but not so to the Jews of Jesus' day. There were thousands then who were willing to accept a purely human Messiah; but very few who grasped the idea that God would send a divine being, "God manifest in the flesh," as his Christ, his anointed representative, his Son. In the discussions in John's Gospel we find the opposing Jews not unwilling to consider our Lord's claim to be the Christ; but the moment he claims sonship to God they pick up stones to stone him as a blasphemer; and in his trial before Pilate, they claimed: "We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God." Acquitted on every other count, on this he was crucified. Bear in mind then, that Jesus' claim to be the Son of God was no afterthought, but that this first witness said: "And I have seen, and have borne witness that this is the Son of God" (1. 34).

II

THE FIRST DISCIPLES

(John 1. 37-51.)

They met Jesus as strangers. He had done no miracle and spoken no word to impress them. They are first attracted to him by the word of the Baptist, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" (1. 36).

"And the two disciples," one Andrew, the other perhaps John, "heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. And Jesus turned, and beheld them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? And they said unto him, Rabbi, . . . where abidest thou? He saith unto them, Come, and ye shall see. They came therefore and saw where he abode; and they abode with him that day" (37-39).

How commonplace! The disciples

were very ordinary young men from the humbler walks in life, fishermen from Lake Tiberias, and he whom they called "Rabbi" was untaught in the schools, had done or said nothing remarkable, was unknown in the nation. Yet probably both of them accepted him at once as the Messiah.

"One of the two that heard John *speak,* and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He findeth first his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah. . . . He brought him unto Jesus. Jesus looked upon him, and said, Thou art Simon, the son of John, thou shalt be called Cephas," Peter, "the Rock." Jesus saw that beneath the rather shifty exterior was the foundation of rock.

To learn the effect of this interview upon Peter we must pass over several weeks. Jesus had become famous. His miracles had become more and more wonderful, so that men spoke of making him king. His teaching, however, be-

came more spiritual, and therefore less acceptable to the worldly. Many of his disciples went back and walked no more with him. "Would ye also go away?" said he to the twelve, of whom Peter had become leader. Then Peter, granite rock that he was, made answer: "Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and know that thou art the Holy One of God" (John 6. 66-69).

But, returning to John the Baptist's encampment, we learn that "on the morrow he," Jesus, "was minded to go forth into Galilee, and he findeth Philip: and Jesus saith unto him, Follow me" (1. 43). With these two words Philip is won to faith in the Messiahship of Jesus.

Even more remarkable is the case of Nathanael. "Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." Nathanael, without

guile indeed, but not without prejudice, answers, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" And Philip, knowing the compelling influence of the very presence of Jesus upon himself, says, "Come and see." Jesus, seeing Nathanael approaching, exclaimed, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" Nathanael, surprised but not convinced, knew his own portrait as sketched by the Master. "Whence knowest thou me?" he asked. "Before Philip called thee," said Jesus, "when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee." Who, then, is this prophet of the clear eye, who sees a man under his own fig tree alone with God? The doubts of the Israelite in whom was no guile vanish, and he exclaims ,"Thou art the Son of God; thou art King of Israel!" (45-49).

If we had been in that group, and had marked this mastery of men by an unknown carpenter, from an obscure village, without the training of the schools,

or any other extraneous help, would we not have taken our place with them, believing that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God?

III

THE FIRST MIRACLE

(John 2. 1-11.)

We have now reached a turning-point in our Lord's ministry. Up to this time he had used only natural means in his appeal to men; now he uses the supernatural. Even then he would have preferred not to have done so. His hour was not yet come. But, like an affectionate son, he yields to the request of his mother.

We are familiar with the story of the marriage in Cana, as recorded in the second chapter of John; the wedding feast, the invitation of Jesus and his disciples, the failing of the supply of wine, the mother's request, Jesus' hesitation but consent to do what his mother requested, the water turned into good wine, the effect of the miracle on the

ruler of the feast, the servants, and the disciples.

Our Lord's hesitation to use his miraculous power is what might be expected. He had utterly refused to turn the stones of the wilderness into bread; shall he now consent to turn water into wine?

Well, he might do for his mother what he refused to do for the devil. The occasion was not ideal, nevertheless, while obliging the mother who had already suffered so much for him, he could give his disciples, whom he is so soon to call to leave all and follow him, proof that he is not only able to give them "day by day their daily bread," but if need be, to furnish even the luxuries of life also.

On the wedding guests the miracle seems to have had little favorable effect. It was to practically the same people that he said a little later, "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will in no wise believe" (4. 48).

The ruler of the feast, the best man, had his little joke on the bridegroom. Calling him, he said something like this: "Well, you are a great provider! Folks generally put on their best wine first; and when the guests have drunk freely, then that which is not so good. But you have kept the good wine until now!"

"The servants that had drawn the water knew" (2. 9). How often it is that those in humble life grasp the truth which their social superiors altogether miss. They knew; but it is doubtful whether they took the obvious step of believing that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God, or that any of them enrolled as disciples of Jesus.

But those who had already accepted Jesus as the Christ, and thus were in condition to profit by it, were lifted by this miracle to a higher plane. They saw that their new friend and Master exercised the very same power by which the God of nature, in the alembic of the vine, turns the water of the rain and

dew into the sweet juices of the grape. Thus Jesus "manifested his glory; and his disciples believed on him" (2. 11).

One other lesson we should not miss: that this wonderful Jesus was *man.* Yonder matron bustling about entertaining the guests is his mother. He sits among the guests, eating and drinking, sharing and encouraging their festivities, beautifying and adorning the institution of marriage, with his presence, and the first miracle that he wrought. Whatever more and greater he may be, he is "The man Christ Jesus."

"We have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but one that hath been tempted on all points like as we are, yet without sin." "In that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted" (Heb. 4. 15 and 2. 18).

IV

JESUS AND NICODEMUS

(John 3. 1-16.)

After a short visit to Galilee, Jesus came to old, conservative Jerusalem. It was Passover time, and everything was at fever heat—great ceremonials, vast crowds, gross abuses.

One of these abuses was, to use Jesus' own phrase, making his "Father's house a house of merchandise" (2. 16). Later, according to another evangelist, Jesus characterized it as making it a "den of robbers" (Matt. 21. 13).

Jesus, who in the meantime had been performing some wonderful miracles, and had, as we are aware, been announced as Messiah by John the Baptist, leaped at once into the exercise of the functions of the Messiahship, by expelling the profane and dishonest swarm

of buyers and sellers from the Temple. This he had a right to do, if, indeed, he was the Messiah.

The authorities were swift to challenge his right: they asked, "What sign showest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?" (2. 18).

Public opinion was divided; some, with the majority of the rulers, demanding greater signs; others holding that no man could do such miracles as Jesus was doing save with the approval and help of God.

Of the latter class was Nicodemus, a candid, open-minded but timid man, a ruler and teacher of Israel, who made the memorable night visit to Jesus.

It is not at all likely that we have anything more than the high lights of the conversation recorded, since all that Saint John gives us may easily be repeated in two or three minutes, a period altogether too brief for such a momentous interview. This accounts for an apparent lack of connection, for in-

stance, between Nicodemus' courteous address and the seemingly brusque reply of Jesus.

How many great truths are given in this short interview! God and the kingdom of God; the new birth by which alone that kingdom can be entered, or seen; the spiritual nature of the new birth, and its source in the Spirit of God; the depravity of that which is born of the flesh; the spiritual birth, invisible and mysterious as the wind, but no less real; Jesus himself, speaking what he knew and bearing witness of what he had seen, descending out of heaven, ascending into heaven, nay, even then in heaven, Son of man and Son of God; atonement through the lifting up of the Son of man, and eternal life through faith in his name (John 3. 1-15).

Throughout the interview we are struck by what we may call the superiority of the Lord Jesus. Nicodemus high in position, rich, learned, influen-

tial; Jesus, the Carpenter of Nazareth, poor, despised and rejected of men; yet everywhere Nicodemus is the puzzled learner, and Jesus the Teacher sent from God.

It is not our purpose to elaborate these capital doctrines uttered by our Lord, but simply to ask ourselves, If we had been present at that interview, as we believe John was, what would have been its bearing upon our belief in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, and our possession of eternal life through faith in his name?

Do we not find fitting answer in the golden words with which John sums up his impressions, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life"?

V

JACOB'S WELL AND BEYOND

(John 4. 4-54.)

WITHDRAWING from Judæa, and thus removing all occasion of friction with the adherents of John the Baptist, Jesus and his disciples took the northward road leading through Samaria to Galilee.

Weary with his long tramp, Jesus sat thus on the well. There was probably not a door in all Samaria that would open to him, and his only shelter from the blazing sun was the canopy over the well. The disciples have gone to the village to buy food, and Jesus is alone.

A Samaritan woman approaches to draw water from the deep well, and Jesus asks for a drink of water, only to be refused.

Jesus was one of those gifted souls who

> "Find tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
> Sermons in stones, and good in everything";

and from the drink of water refused, preached the "living water" as a free gift.

"Sir," said she, "give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come all the way hither to draw." "Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither. The woman answered and said unto him, I have no husband. Jesus saith under her, Thou saidst well, I have no husband: for thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband." (4. 15-18.)

Finding the veil snatched away from her sinful life, but very little abashed by the exposure, she exclaims, "Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet"; and then, perhaps to change a conversation

that had become embarrassing, and perhaps from higher motives, she broaches the age-long question between Jews and Samaritans, as to where they ought to worship, in Jerusalem or on the Samaritan mountain; and the Great Teacher gives an answer that empties the whole controversy of significance. It is not the place, but the spirit of worship that matters. "Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father. . . . But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth. . . . God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship in spirit and truth" (4. 21-24).

Impressed, but not ready to give up her lifelong sectarian belief, the woman appeals the question to a higher authority than that of a prophet, "I know that Messiah cometh; . . . when he is come, he will declare unto us all things.

Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he" (4. 25, 26).

Leaving her water-pot, and that with which she lowered it into the well, for the convenience of Jesus and his company, she hurried back to her village. To the men she cried, "Come, see a man, who told me all things that *ever* I did: can this be the Christ?" (29).

What a narrow, soiled life was hers! Like some of our times, she counted her years by her husbands. Yet she had influence enough to bring the whole village to Jesus; and after two days' ministry with them, the people of Askar recognized Jesus as more than a prophet, broader than a Jewish messiah, as "indeed the Saviour of the world" (42).

When he came into Galilee the news spread that their own prophet, who had done such wonders in Judæa, was coming home; and at Cana he found a nobleman who had hurried up from Capernaum to beg him to come down

and heal his fever-smitten son. Instead of that, he spoke the word of power in Cana and healed the lad in Capernaum. And the grateful father believed and his whole house.

If we had been among the simple-minded Samaritans, or in the nobleman's family, would we not have done the same?

VI

THE LORD OF THE SABBATH

(John 5. 1-47.)

The evangelist now introduces a series of encounters of our Lord with the hostile Jews, in which his claim to be the Christ, the Son of God, was antagonized.

One of these was occasioned by the cure of a paralytic at the pool of Bethesda in Jerusalem.

One Sabbath day Jesus visited this pool, whose waters were reputed to have curative properties, especially at the moment of the moving of the waters, ascribed by some to the descent of an angel into the pool, really due to the action of an intermittent spring.

He found there many sick people, blind, lame, or paralyzed, among them one who had been an invalid for thirty-

eight years. After a few words which drew out the fact that the man was utterly helpless, Jesus told him to rise, take up his bed, and walk.

The man rose up in perfect health, rolled up the pallet on which he had been lying, and walked about with it in his arms.

The crowd, instead of being grateful for the marvelous miracle, were horrified at the breach of the Sabbath involved in carrying the bed.

The upshot of the matter was that Jesus was publicly charged with the crime of Sabbath-breaking. This brought up the question of his Messiahship; for if he indeed was the Christ, he was Lord of the Sabbath also, whereas if he were only man, he was, like other men, subject to the law.

In his answer he planted himself squarely upon his Sonship to God. "My Father," said he, referring, of course, to God his heavenly Father, "worketh hitherto, and I work."

This brought upon him the even more serious charge of blasphemy, "because he not only brake the sabbath, but also called God his own Father, making himself equal with God" (5. 18).

To this capital charge Jesus does not plead "Not guilty." He admits the fact, and justifies it on the loftiest grounds.

He is indeed the Son, in such intimate union with the Father that he does nothing whatever but "what he seeth the Father doing"; while the Father so loves him that he shows everything that he does to the Son (19).

Moreover the Father imparts marvelous powers to the Son; the power to raise the dead and to judge the world, so that men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father (21-23).

Even then the Son was granting eternal life and immunity from judgment to those who heard his word, and believed in his divine mission (24).

But the time was coming when the

dead in the tombs should hear his voice, and should come forth, "they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment" (29).

That such a Being was Lord of the Sabbath needs no argument. But was he? What proof does he offer that he is indeed the Son of God?

He frankly admits that his own testimony alone was not sufficient. But he has other testimony:

1. The witness of John the Baptist. This was fresh in the memory of all, for the very men who were accusing Jesus, had sent to John, not long before, and received his express declaration that Jesus is the Son of God (1. 34).

2. The greater witness of the Father. "The works which the Father hath given me to accomplish," says Jesus, "the very works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me" (5. 36).

Another witness is that of the Scrip-

tures. "Ye search the scriptures," said Jesus, "because ye think that in them ye have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of me" (5. 39). The evidence of the Scriptures is just as convincing to us to-day, as to believers on Jesus in the days of his flesh.

We have a testimony which these ancient believers did not have in the same degree—the growth of the Church of Christ. When we view the church, in spite of the apparent humbleness of its origin, in spite of internal weakness, and errors, and dissensions, rising like a trickling rill from Calvary, deepening and widening until like a mighty river it sweeps on through the centuries, touching and blessing well-nigh every family of man, more potent after two thousand years than ever, and perhaps the greatest moral force on earth to-day, we have proof far greater than that of miracle that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

VII

THE BREAD OF LIFE

(John 6.)

John the Baptist was murdered. Sick at heart and weary in body, Jesus crossed the lake with his disciples, to "rest awhile." But instead of rest he found five thousand people awaiting him; and, instead of being indignant at the intrusion, he "had compassion on them," taught them, healed their sick, and fed the five thousand with the two loaves and five little fishes, from a boy's lunch-bag.

The feast was an object lesson. What it did for the natural life, Jesus declared himself willing to do for the spiritual life. Both were misunderstood—the feast and the discourse on the bread of life. To some who ate of the loaves and fishes, it was merely a

free meal, and they were ready for another the next day. Others saw more clearly what Jesus had to do with feeding them; and they intended to take him by force and make him king, thinking, doubtless, that a man who could carry the commissariat of an army in a lunch-bag would be an ideal leader in a campaign against the Romans. A very few were affected by the miracle of the loaves much as the disciples had been by his first miracle at Cana. He "manifested forth his glory," and they "believed on him."

In like manner the discourse on the bread of life was misunderstood. Our Lord's profoundly spiritual words were taken in the most crass literalness. When he spoke of their eating his flesh and drinking his blood, they thought of cannibalism. They forgot that in the feast on the other side of the lake the original loaves and fishes were a very small part of the feast, and all the rest was—Jesus. If he had not been there,

they would have gone hungry. But taking the baldly literal sense of what he was saying, they altogether missed his meaning, and were disgusted at what they thought he meant; and "upon this many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him" (6. 66).

What, then, was Jesus saying in this discourse on the bread of life?

He was speaking of something far too deep for words, and that must be expressed by figures, if at all. He was speaking of something that to this day most of his followers miss.

There are two sorts of life in the same man: the natural life, by which he does natural things, such things as animals do, only a grade higher—thinking, talking, toiling, playing; and the spiritual life, which only rises to consciousness at the new birth, and by which he does such things as the holy angels are doing, who do God's commandments, "hearkening unto the voice of his word" (Psa. 103. 20).

Jesus does not call this "spiritual life" as we do. Indeed, if by spiritual life we mean a life that influences the spirit only, it is a misnomer; for this life is interfused throughout spirit, soul, and body, keeping the spirit in touch with God, inspiring the soul with new desires and ambitions, making the body the agent of God's will.

Jesus does call it "eternal life." But here, again, we are liable to mistake. We have a way of dividing our existence into two parts—time and eternity; and of thinking of eternal things as having to do mainly with that portion of our lives which lies beyond the grave. There is no such division. We are just as much in eternity now as we ever shall be. Eternal life, beginning now and reaching throughout eternity is, indeed, a life that shall last forever, that is not interrupted by what we call death; but it is much more than that. It is the sort of life that the holy saints lived while in the body, and are still living in glory.

As there are two lives, even so there are two foods—a food for the natural life and a food for the spiritual life. It is of these that Jesus says, "Work not for the food which perisheth, but for the food which abideth unto eternal life, which the Son of man shall give unto you" (6. 27).

Partly grasping the idea that this "food which abideth" was that which would make them efficient to do God's will, some one in the crowd asked him, "What must we do, that we may work the works of God?" (6. 28).

If we had not the teaching of Christ, how would we answer this most important question? Would we say, "Well, if we really want to work the works of God, we must study his Word, we must pray a good deal, we must be very diligent and earnest"? Others might say, "Fast a good bit, afflict your soul, mortify that flesh of yours." Still others might say: "Oh, well, if you really want to do God's will, make up your mind

that you will, and then jump in and do it."

Excellent! but not at all what Jesus says. He says, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent" (29).

Get it, beloved! It isn't anything that you can get *from* Christ, much less anything that you can do, *it is Christ himself that is the bread of life.* Whatever else you may have, without Christ you cannot work the works of God; and if you try, you'll make a mess of it.

"I am the bread of life" is perhaps the most astounding assumption that Jesus ever made; that of all the millions who profess to work the works of God, none shall succeed but those who eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of man. "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, so neither can ye except ye abide in me" (15. 4), says Jesus to the eleven. But, how can we abide in him? He tells us: "He that

eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, abideth in me and I in him."

Pretty strong meat! Yes, it sifted the Master's following. The greater part walked no more with him. Even among the twelve there were symptoms of dissatisfaction. "Would ye also go away?" said Jesus to the twelve. "Peter answered him, To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and know that thou art the Holy One of God" (6. 68, 69).

Well, which way shall we go? with the departing disciples, who said, "This is a hard saying; who can bear it?" or with good old Peter, who had been feasting on the bread of life, and believed and knew that none other than the Holy One of God could feed the soul with the bread of life?

VIII

JANGLING VOICES

THE seventh and eighth chapters of John's Gospel are not easy to analyze; but above the strife of tongues, like the tolling of a great bell above the clatter of a city street, we cannot miss the majestic words of Jesus, words which "nothing extenuate, nor set down aught in malice."

The first jangling voices which we hear are those of Jesus' own brothers. Hard, worldly, skeptical words they utter. "His brethren did not believe on him," but they could not but know that their great Brother was doing marvelous deeds and speaking wonderful words; and, feeling that if he should now be accepted by the authorities as the Messiah it would reflect great credit upon his kinsmen, they appeal to his worldly ambition.

"The lever they use to move him is a taunt. If these works of yours are genuine miracles, don't hang around villages and little country towns, but go and show yourself in the capital. No one who is really confident that he has a claim on public attention wanders about in solitary places, but repairs to the most crowded haunts of men. Go up now to the feast, and your disciples will gather about you, and your claims will be settled once for all" (Marcus Dods).

His brethren did not know that to do what they suggested, and what Jesus actually did six months later, meant to him—death.

When Jesus did at last enter Jerusalem, the city was seething with jangling voices: "Where is he?" "He is a good man." "Not he; but he leadeth the multitude astray." "Is not this the man they are seeking to kill?" "Lo, he speaketh openly, and they say nothing against him." "Do the rulers know

that this is indeed the Messiah?" "Nay, we know whence this man is, but when Christ cometh no one knoweth whence he is." "Well, when the Christ shall come, will he do more signs than this man has done?"

The clear, majestic voice of Jesus dominated these jangling voices. We may say, in brief, that he took back nothing that he had said as to his Messiahship and divine Sonship; but sometimes reached heights he had never touched before.

For instance, "On the last day, the great *day* of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." Jesus had said something very like this before; but now he adds: "He that believeth on me, . . . from within him shall flow rivers of living water" (7. 37, 38). Besides receiving spiritual gifts, the believer is to impart them, to himself become a fountain of the living water. We do not wonder that when his hearers grasped

this promise of the Great Teacher, some said, "Of a truth this is the Prophet," and others, "This is the Christ."

Another high point in Christ's teaching was when Jesus spoke unto them saying, "I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life." A mighty claim this, to be *the light of the world!* Not one of many lights, but THE LIGHT. It is true all of his followers are lights of the world, but only so as planets reflecting the light of the sun.

"They are but broken lights of thee;
And thou, O Lord, art more than they."

Jesus was not by any means allowed to teach in peace. Once a warrant was issued for his arrest; but he captured the captors. The officers returned to those who sent them, without their prisoner, reporting, "Never man spake like this man!"

Often the jangling words interrupted

his teaching. Then the fire flew. It was plain that the "sword of his mouth" was no wooden weapon, but a true Damascus blade. Watching the thrust and parry, we perceive that the Man of Galilee was no mean swordsman. Take this for example:

"I speak the things which I have seen with *my* Father: and ye also do the things, which ye heard from *your* father."

"Our father is Abraham."

"If you were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me, a man that has told you the truth, which I heard from God: this did not Abraham."

"We are not born of fornication; we have one Father, *even* God." . . .

"Ye are of *your* father the devil; and the lusts of your father it is your will to do" (38-44).

Pretty sharp talk that! There was a good deal of human nature in Jesus of Nazareth.

In this discussion Jesus laid stress upon the credibility of his own testimony. This may not have seemed very convincing to the Pharisees, who said, "Thou bearest witness of thyself: thy witness is not true"; but to us now, there is no proof whatever so convincing as Jesus' own evident conviction that he was indeed the Christ, the Son of God.

Right here comes in the evidential value of miracles to us who have never seen a miracle. If Jesus' assertion and evident belief that he was the Christ the Son of God stood alone, we might suspect that he was a victim of insane delusions of grandeur. But we have overwhelming historical proof that his assertion was backed up by such miracles as no other man ever did; so that we have, as he says, "the witness of two"—of himself and of the heavenly Father who gave him power to work miracles—that he was the Christ, the Son of God.

IX

"CAN A DEVIL OPEN THE EYES OF THE BLIND?"

We now take up the study of one of the sweetest stories ever told, that of the grateful man who was born blind (John 9. 1 to 10. 21).

"A prophet on the Sabbath day
Had touched his sightless eyes with clay,
And made him see, who had been blind."

This was a miracle in many ways unique. First of all, we can trace its origin back into the mind of Jesus and into the heart of God his Father.

There was in the mind of the Master a powerful impulse to give sight to this blind man; and back of that still, his consciousness that it was the will of his Father that he should do so.

God wanted that blind man given his

sight, partly for the blind man's own sake, but more for the sake of giving the light of life to those who would receive it through his Son.

Jesus wanted to give sight to the blind man, partly because he loved him, but even more because it was the will of the Father to glorify his Son by empowering him to give to the world just such signs.

The miracle was done in circumstances of extreme danger to Jesus. He had just escaped from stoning by hiding himself (8. 59). It was the Sabbath day, which he was already under indictment for violating. Another Sabbath miracle would seem altogether likely to reveal his hiding place and bring the whole rabble, with the stones in their hands, and more angry than ever, down upon him.

Some may have thought that it was no time or place for such a miracle; but Jesus felt that it must be done and done then. "I must work the works of him

that sent me while it is day," said he, adding, "The night cometh when no man can work." Truly he was our brother!

It may be that our Saviour's desire to avoid a tumult explains his seemingly grotesque act in spitting on the ground, making a paste of the road-dust with the spittle, and smearing the eyes of him who was born blind. It is altogether likely that it was the Master's touch, and not the clay, or spittle, or the Siloam-water, that was the means of restoring the blind man's sight. If so, the actual miracle was performed at the Temple gate, not at Siloam. But to keep the knowledge of the miracle, not only from the angry mob within the Temple, but from everybody, including the restored man himself, Jesus seals up his eyes with the clay, and sends him to Siloam to wash. And as he washed, the seal of clay dissolved, and the man came seeing. When he came back to his old sitting place the excitement was

over, and those who would could look calmly upon another sign given by the Father to justify the belief that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

There is perhaps no recorded miracle more open to investigation than this one, or any that was more carefully investigated; and that by thoroughly competent and most unfriendly investigators. In every direction it can be traced back to beginnings.

The man was born blind. This was the common belief. The disciples said so; Jesus himself said so; his parents said so; and what is more convincing than a mother's evidence that her baby was blind? The man himself said so, and didn't he know? Was not his whole youth and early manhood proof enough?

Now he saw. "One thing I know," said he, "that whereas I was blind, now I see." They doubted his word, they reviled him, they twitted him as "altogether born in sin," they cast him out

of the synagogue, a dreadful penalty! But,

"Their threats and fury all went wide;
They could not touch his Hebrew pride;
Their sneers at Jesus and his band,
Nameless and homeless in the land,
Their boasts of Moses and his Lord,
All could not change him by one word:
I know not what this man may be,
Sinner or saint; but as for me,
One thing I know, that I am he
Who once was blind, but now I see."

And how clearly he reasoned! "Since the world began it was never heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing."

They could find no answer, so they cast him out of the synagogue, expelled him from their church; and when Jesus heard of it, he found him and took him in.

This brings before us two groups, the Pharisees, who cast this long-afflicted lamb out of their fold, and

Jesus and his followers who found him, and took him in. Both groups claimed to shepherd the flock of God. Of those who had thrown this man out, their own prophet had said, "Woe unto the shepherds that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith Jehovah" (Jer. 23. 1). It is of them that Jesus says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the fold of the sheep, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber" (10. 1). Of himself he says, "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep" (10. 11). "I am the good shepherd; and I know mine own, and my own know me" (14).

"There arose again a division among the Jews. . . . And many of them said, He hath a demon and is mad; why hear ye him? Others said, These are not the words of one possessed with a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?" (19-21).

Can it? Would it if it could? Are not these miracles of Jesus "too great to be done by man, and too good to be done by the devil"? How can we avoid the conclusion that verily Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God?

X

BETHANY

Sweet Bethany! Here Jesus was always welcome and honored. Here, in a home of refinement and comfort, he rested before the Battle of Calvary. Here too we get outstanding proof of the lovable humanity and mighty divinity of Jesus Christ.

Saint Luke tells of the Master's first reception in Bethany: "As they went on their way, he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house" (Luke 10. 38). Happy is the home into which Jesus is received! Thrice happy where, as in this home, he loves to stay!

Martha "had a sister called Mary, who also sat at the Lord's feet, and heard his word" (Luke 10. 39). "Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus" (John 11. 5). Blessed home!

Driven out of Jerusalem and rejected in Galilee, Jesus "went away again beyond the Jordan into the place where John was at the first baptizing; and there he abode" (John 10. 40).—"Tenting again on the old camp-ground"!

Here he receives an urgent message from the sisters, "Lord, behold he whom thou lovest is sick," but strangely seems to loiter there until Lazarus died, was buried and lay in the grave. Then, with his disciples, he turned his steps toward Judæa.

There is little need to recount the story so familiar and so thrilling; Jesus, a hunted man, shunning the town where he knew the emissaries of the Sanhedrin would be; Martha, strong and vigilant even in the shadow of death, hearing of his coming, and meeting him with the words, so often repeated with Mary, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother would not have died"; her flickering hope that her brother would rise

again, perhaps "in the resurrection at the last day," perhaps sooner; her firm faith in Jesus as all that he claimed to be, that whatever he might do or not do, he was "the Christ, the Son of God, *even* he that cometh into the world" (11. 27). Then we have gentle Mary, too much absorbed with grief to notice who came or went, but at Martha's whisper, "The Master is here and calleth for thee," rising quickly, hastening to where Jesus was, taking her old place "at his feet," and echoing the words so often conned over with her sister, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother would not have died." And we have that weeping procession to the grave, when, with the rest, "Jesus wept"; the reluctant removal of the stone door of the sepulcher, when we seem to catch the mephitic smell, and see the prone body in its white linen cerements; the prayer of Jesus, rather a confidential talk with God than a prayer; the cry with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth!" the stir

in the cave as the rising dead comes forth "bound hand and foot with grave clothes; and his face was bound about with a napkin" (11. 44).

It is all over. The sisters, wild with joy, cling about the neck of their risen brother, the crowd go with them and him to their home, the spies of the Pharisees creep off to tell them the latest news; and Jesus?—Ah! Jesus, more than ever fugitive, is well on his way toward Ephraim, surely not the Ephraim of modern scholarship—or guesswork—but the ancient Ephron, where Judas Maccabæus won a great victory (1 Macc. 5. 46), still beyond the place where John at first baptized.

There is another recorded visit of Jesus to Bethany (12. 1-11), when "they made him a supper there; and Martha served; but Lazarus was one of them that sat at meat with him. Mary therefore took a pound of ointment of pure nard, very precious, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped

his feet with her hair; and the house"—and world—"was filled with the odor of the ointment" (12. 2, 3). Then it was that Judas Iscariot found the odor of the ointment more offensive than the body of entombed Lazarus could have been, and in his indignation went and forged the last link in the chain that should bind Jesus to the cross.

In Bethany we find Jesus intensely human in his tearful sympathy; but divine in the power that called his dead friend back to life. As Martha said of him, so say we: "Yea, Lord: I have believed that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, even he that cometh into the world" (11. 27).

XI

JERUSALEM

(John 12.)

While our Lord's fame on account of the raising of Lazarus was fresh, he offered himself to the common people of Jerusalem and the passover pilgrims from all over the Jewish world as their Messiah and King. This he did by purposely fulfilling the prophecy of the prophet Zechariah: "Thy king cometh unto thee, . . . riding upon an ass, even upon a colt the foal of an ass" (Zech. 9. 9). He presented himself in a way that, without offending the Romans, would be understood by every Israelite. What interests us is that Jesus claimed to be the Messiah of the Hebrew prophets, and by the hosannas of the multitude was so accepted by the people. From thence forward, whether

he lived or whether he died, he was JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS; so even his enemies hailed him; so Pilate wrote the title for his cross, writing wiser than he knew. May we add that, in spite of the fact that "he came unto his own, and his own received him not," Jesus has brought more honor upon Israel than all her prophets and kings; and to-day, in the estimation of the world, the greatest of the sons of Abraham is Jesus of Nazareth.

And he had a message for the Gentiles. Certain Greeks that came up to worship at the feast sought and obtained an interview with Jesus. To them he said, "The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified" (12. 23); that is, that the movement which he was heading should succeed gloriously.

But how? Not by his continued life, but by his *death*. As a kernel of wheat must drop into the ground, or remain a bare kernel of wheat, must die to bring

forth much fruit, so must the Messiah die, to

> "live again
> In minds made better by his living."

A Messiah reigning on in Jerusalem would mean a localized kingdom, a kingdom of this world; but a Messiah who hated his life in this world, and who was "lifted up" to die upon the cross, would draw all men, Greeks and Hebrews, Jews and Gentiles, unto him.

Here the hostile Jews broke in: "Lifted up! How can the Christ, who abideth forever, be lifted up?" They rightly understood by "lifting up" execution on a cross, just as we understand by hanging execution on a gallows. How, then, could the Christ be lifted up?

Jesus does not directly answer, but he has a word for those hostile Jews. He would have them come into the light in which he and his little flock were walking. It was still shining, but the

darkness was at hand. Yet there was still time; and if they would only "believe in the light," even they might be sons of the light.

Then he gave them an object lesson of the coming darkness. Jesus "departed and hid himself from them" (12. 36).

He adds a few words, perhaps the last that he was ever to speak to his own who received him not, most of them already spoken to the same people. Their gist is that he is so united to God the Father, so truly his messenger and representative, that to believe in him was to believe in God, to reject him was to reject God, and that in rejecting both him and the Father they were rejecting eternal life.

What shall we say of this man, who, having just displayed his power in raising dead Lazarus to life, staked and deliberately lost his life on the claim that he was the Messiah and King of Israel, and that, if he were lifted up, he would

draw all men unto him, Gentiles as well as Jews—a claim fulfilled by the coming into his kingdom of multitudes of all nations, and kindreds, and peoples, and tongues, more and more continually even unto this day? Is not this the Christ, the Son of God, the author and giver of eternal life?

XII

THE UPPER ROOM

(John 13-17.)

The "upper room" is the Holy of holies of John's Gospel, if not of the entire Bible. An exhaustive study of it does not belong to our plan, which is, rather, to listen to this marvelous table talk of Jesus, Testament in hand, and inquire what bearing it has on our belief that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God?

First of all we are impressed with his human friendship. "Having loved his own that were in the world, he loved them unto the end" (13. 1).

This love was condescending love. "Knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he came forth from God, and goeth unto God" (13. 3), he took upon him the

form of a servant, by washing his disciples' feet.

This was to teach them a lesson in service. "Ye call me Teacher and, Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, the Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet." In this he does not bate in the least his claim of superiority.

In no one thing was the quality of his friendship shown more clearly than in his treatment of Judas Iscariot, the traitor, so kind, so patient, so forbearing was it, until by his own act that wretched apostle became apostate.

If we may accept the arrangement suggested by Dr. Moffatt and others, by which chapters fifteen and sixteen are restored to what is supposed to be their original position in the middle of the thirty-first verse of the thirteenth chapter, we come at once to the cementing or interfusing of the friendship of the disciples with their Lord, as the branch abides in the vine. This is much

more intimate than earthly friendship. It is the interlocking of their very natures, he in them and they in him, as the branch in the vine and the vine in the branch.

The bond which united them—as we might say, the sap which made the vine and its branches one—was *love*, the measure of which in them was that they should keep his commandments, and in him that he should lay down his life for his friends (15. 10, 13).

Nor would he have this merely a union between himself and each one of them. He would have no schism among the branches any more than between each branch and the vine; the gist of his commandment was that they should "love one another, even as he had loved them" (15. 12).

This mutual love would soon be their only earthly consolation, for the world would hate them even as it had hated him, would persecute them as it had persecuted him, would think that a serv-

ice had been rendered to God in killing them even as on the morrow his murderers would think the same in killing him (15. 18ff.; 16. 2).

One mighty heavenly consolation they would have in the loneliness and suffering which they would endure in the world: the COMFORTER (15. 26), whose presence would be so indispensable to them, that it was expedient that Jesus should go away from them, for if he did not go away, the Comforter would not come, "but," said he, "if I go, I will send him unto you" (16. 7). It was impracticable for Jesus, at the same time, to be with them in bodily presence and in them in spirit; and this Comforter, this Spirit of truth, was none other than "the Spirit of Jesus" (Acts 16. 7). Thus it is that in promising the coming of the Spirit of truth, Jesus says, "I will not leave you desolate: I come unto you" (14. 18).

There was another party to this league of friendship—the *Father*. In

answer to a question of Judas, not Iscariot, "Lord, what is come to pass that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" Jesus answered, "If a man love me, he will keep my word: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (14. 22, 23). So that the Father, as well as the Spirit and the Son, joins this sacred fellowship.

To this Father—whom Jesus had once identified to the Jews, as he "of whom ye say, that he is your God" (John 8. 54), and to whom he was so related that to have seen Jesus was to have seen the Father—"Lifting up his eyes to heaven, he said," in a prayer of which every petition is afire with God: "Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was. I manifested thy name unto the men whom thou gavest me out of the world. . . . The words which thou gavest me I have given unto them, and they received

them, and knew of a truth that I came forth from thee, and they believed that thou didst send me. . . . Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word; that they may all be one; . . . even as we *are* one; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfected into one; that the world may know that thou didst send me" (John 17. 5, 6, 8, 20, 23).

We have followed this confidential table talk of Jesus, in which he laid bare his very soul to his disciples, and to God; and in view of it all we ask, in our Lord's own words: "What think ye of the Christ? whose son is he?" (Matt. 22. 42.)

XIII

THE BATTLE OF CALVARY

(Chapters 18-20.)

When Judas Iscariot went to the chief priests to betray Jesus for thirty pieces of silver, if he could have revealed some immorality in his life, or some trickery in his miracles, he might as well have asked and received thirty thousand pieces of silver as a paltry thirty. But, after three years' intimate association with Jesus, all that he could reveal was the place where "Jesus ofttimes resorted with his disciples" for rest and prayer.

This he did reveal; and when with "a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, with weapons and torches," the garden was surrounded, and Jesus "knowing all things that were coming upon him, went forth, and

saith unto them, I am he; . . . they went backward, and fell to the ground" (18. 4, 6).

It is hard to conceive how John, who is usually so restrained in his statements, and who is here describing the humiliation of Jesus, his arrest, his binding and leading away, his scourging and crucifixion, should put into his history an event so unlikely as this, unless it was true.

True indeed it was! The kingly man who met them at the entrance of the garden was so majestic, so unlike their conception of the supposed bandit, whom they had come with swords and staves to arrest, that they could not believe it when they heard from his own lips that he was Jesus of Nazareth, and, taking him to be some high dignitary, they saluted him as if he were a king.

Not less dignified was his bearing at his mock trial before Annas and Caiaphas, who had already prejudged him to death. And when in his hearing

Peter, as Jesus had foretold, thrice denied that he knew him, that kingly glance that had brought those who came to arrest him to the earth, melted Peter's heart.

Had it not been for the malignity of the persecutors and the weakness of the judge, the trial of Jesus before Pilate would have been a vindication. Pilate found "no fault at all in him." Nay, comparing him with the Jewish rabble who were accusing him, Pilate ranked Jesus as King of the Jews. Whatever the purple robe may have meant to the mocking soldiers, to Pilate it betokened kingly majesty, just as the gorgeous robe with which Herod arrayed him was really a white robe betokening innocence (Luke 23. 11). When Pilate penned the title for the cross, "JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS," he knew that, though

"Trouble-tried and torture-torn,
The kingliest kings are crowned with thorn."

Pilate also knew that he could have no authority at all against Jesus, except it were given him from above. Roman law gave him no authority to condemn an innocent man to the cross; and he certainly had no other authority. Were it not for the will of God that Jesus should die for sinners, and Jesus' consent to yield his will to that of God, Pilate could never have sent him to the cross. He was only an instrument, guilty indeed, of a higher power.

The real charge against Jesus was that he made himself the Son of God. This he never denied. For this he died on the cross, thus ratifying by his suffering and death his claim to be the Christ, the Son of God.

We need not dwell upon the scene of Calvary, perhaps never so well summed up as by Rousseau the French philosopher: "If the life and death of Socrates are those of a philosopher, the life and death of Jesus are those of a God." But in the resurrection, the Battle of

Calvary that seemed almost lost as he was "crucified, dead and buried," turns to victory. What mean the stone taken from the sepulcher, the empty tomb, the words passed between the risen Christ and Mary Magdalen, the lips so lately sealed in death, saying to the disciples, "Peace be unto you"? Can we better answer than in the words of the doubting apostle, when he saw the pierced hands and feet and the riven side of the Crucified vibrant with eternal life, "Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God" (20. 28)?

XIV

JOHN SUMS UP

Two writers are really concerned in producing John's Gospel, an editor and the author. The editor was probably that Gaius to whom John addressed his Third Epistle, and of whom a tradition, of some authority, says that "the Gospel of John was published in Ephesus through Gaius."

This editor, who certainly was of sufficient standing in the early church to give his commendation weight, testifies to the veracity and competency of the author: "This is the disciple that beareth witness of these things, and wrote these things; and we know that his witness is true." It is probably the editor who identifies the author as, "the disciple whom Jesus loved . . . who also leaned back on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, who is he that betrayeth thee?" (21. 20).

It may be asked, why the editor did not name the author, instead of designating him in this roundabout way? Well, the answer seems to be, that to do so would be to bring suffering, or even death, upon the author, who was already a marked man by his exile to Patmos. Such was the enmity of the Roman government toward the sect everywhere spoken against, that to be a Christian was considered a capital crime. And it will be noticed that not one of the historical writers of the New Testament writes under his own name.

The editor, then, goes as far as he safely could toward identifying the author as John the Beloved, the bosom friend of Jesus, and declares him to be competent and trustworthy. Tradition assures us that John wrote his Gospel in ripe old age, when he had had ample opportunity to put his beliefs to the test.

What, then, has this close friend of the Lord Jesus—whose testimony as an eyewitness is received by his contempo-

raries as beyond all question, who for threescore or more years had been putting his beliefs to the test—to say about the argument he himself has framed?

He tells us that after the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, new light was thrown upon his dark saying, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." Whatever else Jesus may have had in mind, he referred to the "temple of his body"; and John says, "When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he spake this; and they believed . . . the word which Jesus had said" (2. 19, 22).

It is not always easy, or even possible, to decide whether certain words are to be credited to John, or to some other speaker. Thus at the close of the conversation with Nicodemus, we are not sure whether Jesus or John gives the well-known sentence, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have

eternal life"; but in either case the bearing of the words on the conclusion of John's argument is clear (3. 16).

We cannot fail to notice the fairness of John's argument. He does not by any means confine his account to things favorable to the claims of Jesus. He gives both sides.

Thus, referring especially to the raising of Lazarus, he says, "But though he had done so many signs before them, yet they believed not on him" (12. 37). And why not? Their own prophet, Isaiah, tells why. The trouble was not of the head, but of the heart. Blindness had happened to Israel, that judicial blindness which comes as the result and punishment of sin.

"He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart;
Lest they should see with their eyes, and perceive with their heart;
And should turn,
And I should heal them" (John 12. 40; Isa. 6. 10).

They had sinned away their day of grace, and the things which belonged to their peace were hid from their eyes.

The careful reader of John's Gospel can hardly miss other remarks of the evangelist himself, going to show that he had the utmost confidence in the conclusion that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that those who believe in his name have eternal life. We offer but one more.

An author often conceives the ideas of the introduction to his book last of all. It was so with John. We look, therefore, to the opening words of his Gospel for his ripest conclusion.

He introduces him who is to be the subject of his book as the *Logos*. This was a term much in use by the theologians of John's day to denote a manifestation of or from God. Philo used it to express God speaking or acting in time and space. In his use of the word Philo seems almost Christian. He speaks of the Logos as "The high

priest and advocate who pleads the cause of sinful humanity before God," as "The first-born Son of God," as "The second God."

John identifies this Logos, or *Word,* with Jesus, who "became flesh and dwelt among us," to whom John the Baptist was bearing testimony; and also with the Word of God, through whom "all things were made that are made"; who was in the beginning with God.

"AND THE WORD WAS GOD."

This is the last word that need be said. It explains all the rest, the marvelous life, the mighty signs, the wonderful words, the sublime self-sacrifice of Jesus. He was the Word, and the Word WAS GOD.

He who believes in the name of Jesus as including all this, who so reverences him as to obey and follow him, and so trusts him as to accept him as Saviour, hath everlasting life.

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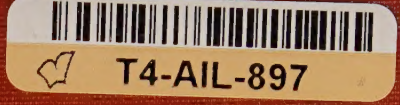
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